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ABSTRACT

The present paper reviews recent research in the area of nonstandard English: the major results to date, the significance of this research for education, and suggestions for further research. The notion of "standard" English resists precise definition; there is not a simple set of linguistic features which can be said to define it. The term "nonstandard" English also lacks a precise definition. There is, however, some intuitive notion about the range of speech habits which identify a speaker of standard English. (George Wallace, Richard Nixon, and H. L. Hunt may be considered speakers of standard English, while Cesar Chavez, Eldridge Cleaver, and Nguyen Cao Ky speak nonstandard dialects, and in some cases, perhaps the standard English dialect as well.) A dialect may be classified from at least four points of view, according to (1) whether the speaker learned English as his first language, or second or third; (2) the region of the U.S. where the language was learned; (3) the cultural composition of the speech community; and (4) the socio-economic status (SES) of the speech community. A dialect may reflect all of these classifying labels. The effect of SES on a speaker's dialect is not absolute presence or absence of certain linguistic features but rather the relative frequency of these features. Speech style is distinguished from social dialect. (AMM)

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NON-STANDARD ENGLISH

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0. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to review recent research in the area of non-standard English: the major results to date, the significance of this research for education, and suggestions for further research. The notion of standard English (SE) resists precise definition: there is no simple set of linguistic features which, taken together, can be said to define standard English. And, since the concept of non-standard English necessarily derives from the concept of standard English, it follows that the term non-standard English lacks a precise definition as well. What is standard within one speech community under a given set of conditions might be viewed as inappropriate and quite non-standard in different circumstances. Any attempt to carefully define standard English is probably futile. The standard of a particular area -- city, state, region -- is usually that dialect of English held most prestigious, namely, that spoken by the majority of educated adults in the area. In nearly all areas of the United States, this amounts to the dialect spoken by educated whites, even though the majority of English speakers may speak a quite different dialect.

However, there is some intuitive notion about the range of speech habits which will identify a speaker of standard English. George Wallace,

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Richard Nixon and H.L. Hunt can all be said to be speakers of standard English (and perhaps other dialects as well) while Cesar Chavez, Eldridge Cleaver, and Nguyen Cao Ky all can be said to speak non-standard dialects of English (and in some cases perhaps the standard English dialect as well). During this discussion, we will be relying on the general intuition of the reader that the concept of standard English is understood, if only in an impressionistic way. Most of the discussion of dialect-specific features will be done by comparing the dialect under discussion to standard English. This should not be interpreted to suggest that standard English is in any way logically prior in the evolution of English dialects or that it is more developed or more powerful. We will use standard English as a basis for comparison since the majority of readers will share this dialect.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 1 contains some preliminary remarks to assure a common starting point, understanding of terms, assumptions, etc., in the remainder of the paper; Section 2 contains a discussion of some theoretical issues raised in the study of non-standard dialects. In section 3 we present a summary of recent descriptive work on non-standard English dialects, and in Section 4 we consider the application of research on non-standard dialects to educational problems. Section 5 contains some recommendations for future research.

I will concentrate on results during 1969, but, so that the picture presented will representative and clear, earlier work occasionally will be discussed. This view will emphasize research on those dialects of English labeled non-standard, not the use to which the results of this research have been put. In particular, I am not considering research on the child's

acquisition of English as a second language, adult acquisition of English as a second language, problems of bilingual education, the inadequacy of standardized intelligence or reading tests to measure the language ability of non-standard dialect speakers, or the recent development of school curricula to teach standard English to non-standard students.

1. Preliminary Remarks

A speaker of English is necessarily a speaker of some dialect of English. English, as a language, can be characterized rather abstractly as a set of phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic linguistic features, and the ways in which these can be combined so as to relate the acceptable utterances of the language to their associated meanings (the sound-meaning correlations). But no one can ever be said to "speak English" since no one ever actually uses just this set of linguistic features and combines them in just the prescribed ways. Rather, a speaker customarily utilizes some rather large subset of these linguistic features and this subset can be said to define his particular idiolect of English. A group of English speakers may display nearly the same subset of features; these people can be said to speak the same dialect of English. Again, no one ever uses only the features peculiar to his dialect. Quite clearly, the precise definition of English or a particular dialect of English is not available, nor, in my opinion, is it likely to be. Notions of "a language" or of "a dialect" are, in the main, impressionistic ones, even if they are supported by linguistic attempts at formal precise statements.

From the point of view of the linguist, two dialects (and from now on we will be speaking about English only) can differ along at least four continua:

lexical, phonological, morphological and syntactic. As an example, let us consider the dialect spoken in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. This dialect differs from standard English in all four areas: i) lexical -- bubbler is used for water fountain; anti-man is used for homosexual; ii) phonological -- the words rat, wrought, and rot are all pronounced as the SE word rot; beer and bear are pronounced alike as beeya; iii) morphological -- the s of the present tense, third person singular verb form is lacking -- "He like me"; iv) syntactic -- questions are asked without requiring that the subject and some part of the verb can be permuted -- "You can do that?"

As a general rule, two dialects which differ primarily in lexical items (i.e., which share nearly all linguistic features of phonology, morphology and syntax) usually are thought to be much more closely related than those which differ in phonological respects as well. In addition, those dialects which differ in morphological and perhaps syntactic combinations as well as lexical and phonological features are felt to be still farther apart. However, it is important to recognize that the divergence of two dialects (in contrast to two languages) is never very great, from a linguistic standpoint, although from the point of view of the speakers, the dialects may be mutually almost unintelligible. The similarities of two dialects are vastly greater than their differences. Nevertheless, speakers of different dialects often have considerable difficulty in understanding one another. Lack of intelligibility is not an adequate criterion for deciding whether two groups speak two dialects of the same language or two different languages. The term dialect, insofar as it admits of any precise characterization, is defined in terms of linguistic features used by a speech community, not according to mutual

intelligibility among speakers.

A dialect may be classified from at least four points of view (there are perhaps others, depending on one's orientation, but these will suffice for the present discussion). The first major distinction is whether the speaker learned English as his first language or whether, as in the case of many Puerto Ricans, Alaskan Eskimos, and so forth, he learned English as a second or third language. A second classifying feature concerns the region of the U.S. where the language was learned. We speak of southern English, Appalachian English, Yankee English, and so forth. The cultural composition of the speech community is yet a third aspect of dialect characterization. The term Black English is used to refer to the dialect spoken by American Negroes, primarily those living in the northern inner-city areas. And fourth, the socio-economic status (SES) of the speech-group may be reflected in the dialect spoken by the members of the group. The working class whites of the Southern U.S. have language characteristics not shared by other Southern dialect groups; similarly, the Boston Brahmins constitute a small dialect group.

Clearly, these classifying terms are not completely independent; a dialect may reflect two, three, or even four of the classifying labels. The Puerto Rican who speaks Spanish natively and who learned English in Harlem speaks a dialect of English which exhibits features of cross-linguistic inteference from his mother-tongue Spanish, as well as the culturally determined cross-dialectal interference from the characteristics of Black English found in Northern cities among lower SES groups.

Although there is no neat taxonomy relating the various forces which affect the composition of a dialect, one generalization does seem to hold: the effect of a speaker's SES on his dialect is not absolute presence or absence of certain linguistic features but rather the relative frequency of these features. An example will clarify this point. All speakers of English delete some word-final stop consonants in all but the most precise and formal speech. When speaking with normal stress and intonation and at normal conversational speed, the speaker of the sentence "I burned my hand on the stove" will nearly always omit the final d on the verb burned. (The final d is preceded by a consonant n and the following word begins with a consonant m. This phonetic environment permits all English speakers to remove the final d from the speech stream.) However, only lower SES speakers (as opposed to middle SES or upper SES) frequently omit the final stop consonant d on the word hand, which is preceded by the consonant n, but this time is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, the o of on. Both groups include the final d of both burned and hand when asked to pronounce the words in isolation. Similarly, the final g on the ing suffix (e.g., running) is far more frequently omitted in lower SES speech than in middle or upper SES.

At this point we must distinguish between speech style, which depends upon speech context, and social dialect, which is part of a speaker's inherent linguistic system (or language competence -- see below) existing independent of context. We talk about a variety of styles available to a speaker: formal, colloquial, patronizing, intimate, rude, and so forth. In a formal style, a speaker is more likely to choose lexical items which are

polysyllabic; his rate of speaking will be relatively slow; his syntactic constructions will tend to be more elaborate (e.g., subordinate clauses and multiply embedded structures), and so forth. Of course, a relatively slow rate of speech usually will mean that many phonetic features missing in rapid conversation will now be present (e.g., final stop consonants or the final g of the suffix -ing). The increased frequency of these features over the speaker's norm does not reflect a change in social dialect, but in the speech style associated with a particular context. Speech style relates not so much to a speaker's language competence as to his use of that competence to communicate his ideas.

As a footnote to this point, it is indeed possible, for example, that the formal style within one group of dialect speakers very closely resembles the colloquial style of a group of different dialect speakers. Such apparent overlap is likely to occur when the two dialects are relatively closely related, but one should not conclude that the same dialect is being spoken.

One final preliminary remark is in order. The linguist is usually concerned with the language removed from the culture of the speaker. Particularly within the theory of transformational grammar -- the framework in which nearly all linguistic research has been carried out in the last five years -- the grammar of a language consists of a system of rules which expresses explicitly the correspondence between the sounds and meaning of the acceptable sentences of the language. The grammar attempts to capture these correspondences of the ideal speaker-listener in the homogeneous speech-community who knows the language perfectly and who is unaffected in his use of the language by linguistically irrelevant factors such as memory lapses,

momentary distractions, errors (random or characteristic) and personal feelings. This view of linguistics leads to a fundamental distinction: that between competence (the knowledge the ideal speaker-hearer has about his language) and performance (the way in which he actually uses this language). Only in the ideal situation is it appropriate to talk about the performance of the speaker directly reflecting his competence. Since these conditions are never met, the task of the linguist is to abstract away from the performance of language to determine the actual underlying linguistic competence. Just as the physicist must determine the law of gravity using data obtained under conditions involving irrelevant factors such as air resistance, so the linguist must find the basic generalizations in the language (rules of the grammar) by using data often affected by irrelevant factors such as distractions, change of mind, etc.

Because of this orientation on the part of most linguists, most research to date has failed to consider (i) the relative frequency with which a given linguistic feature is utilized in the actual speech of the dialect speaker (e.g., just how often in normal conversation the SE speaker drops a final t or d and in what linguistic contexts), and (ii) the way in which language is used. This last point is particularly important. It is one thing to study the language of a group in order to characterize the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical aspects of the communication system. It is quite another to examine the cultural orientation towards the use of language and to what use particular utterances are put. Consideration of this inter-relationship between language and culture is beyond the scope of this

review. But it is crucial to realize that before one can anticipate effectively using in the area of education much of the research in the area of non-standard dialects of English, one has to know this relationship. It is important to know, for example, that the black speaker uttering "What's happening?" is not inquiring about some putative recent or ongoing incident; this is one way for him to greet a colleague, just as the SE speaker might inquire "How are you?" without really being interested in the immediate health of the respondent.

2. Theoretical Implications

The most striking theoretical implication in recent work on non-standard dialects (although these remarks carry over to work on all dialects) is that current linguistic theory, transformational theory in particular, is not presently capable of adequately handling the descriptive facts. The linguist is usually content to characterize a particular linguistic feature as either being present, or occurring in free variation. In SE, for example, the third person singular present tense verb form always ends in an s (essentially the only anomaly in English weak-verb conjugation); the presence of two negative words in a simple sentence almost never occurs -- "John doesn't never do that" is an unacceptable sentence; and the verbal particle in idioms like look up, figure out occurs freely with a few exceptions, on either side of the direct object noun phrase (the sentences "He looked up the number" and "He looked the number up" are both acceptable in SE). However the linguist chooses to characterize them, the grammar must somewhere account for these three facts by rules of the grammar.

However, recent research into non-standard dialects, particularly by Labov (1968) in looking at Black English in New York City, has demonstrated that the claim that a rule is either obligatory or optional is far too simpleminded. Take, for example, the deletion of word-final t or d mentioned above (consonant cluster simplification). As stated there, SE speakers delete final stops far less often than white non-standard (WNS) speakers. Labov presented data to show that BE speakers delete the word-final stops even more often than the WNS speakers. We could simply state the rule as being optional in the grammar for each of these dialects and let it go at that. However, a closer look at the actual data suggests otherwise.

Labov's observations on this point (greatly oversimplified for sake of exposition here) can be summarized in the following table.

TABLE I

XC __#CX	(fist fight)
XC#__#CX	(passed Frank)
XC __#VX	(fist at)
XC#__#VX	(passed at)
XV __#CX	(red car)
XV#__#CX	(stayed here)
XV __#VX	(red animal)
XV#__#VX	(stayed over)

Relative Probability of t/d Deletion

(listed with most probable environment first)

From this table we see that consonant cluster simplification occurs most often where the word is a single morpheme ending in the consonant cluster Ct and which is followed by a word beginning with a consonant (fist fight). Consonant cluster simplification is found to occur less often if

the final consonant has arisen as the result of a productive morphological process (e.g., the systematic past tense marker -ed for regular weak verbs in English). Both of these environments are more conductive to consonant cluster simplification than environments where the following word has an initial vowel (fist at; passed at). Finally, final t or d is deleted by BE speakers, but still less often if a vowel precedes the final stop, whether or not the following word begins with a vowel or consonant (red car, stayed here, etc.)

Whether or not the speaker of BE chooses to apply the consonant cluster simplification rule in a particular utterance is clearly a matter of performance, that is, of how he will use his language in a given situation. But, and this is crucial, the fact that BE speakers systematically and characteristically exhibit a relative frequency of application of cluster simplification in terms of phonetic context is a matter of competence. As such, this information must be incorporated into a grammar of the dialect of BE. This has been attempted by Labov(1969) though I feel, with only partial success. Using current linguistic notation but introducing the concept of variable constraints which reflect the effect of a particular environment on the probability of application of a rule, Labov has attempted to include such information into a grammatical description of BE. The rule to account for the observations given above is represented as follows:

$$t/d \text{ ---} \quad (\emptyset) \qquad\qquad /X\alpha(C)_{\gamma}(\#)\ __\ \beta(\sim V)X$$

The rule states that the deletion of t/d is optional (the (ø)), that the primary constraint is whether or not the t/d is preceded by a consonant rather than a vowel, that the second most relevant aspect of the environment is

whether the word following begins with a non-vowel (either a consonant or the end of the utterance), and that the third and least relevant consideration is whether the cluster was separated by a morpheme boundary.

I have taken the time and space to present this (simplified) example of recent work to give a clear idea what this extention to a grammar amounts to. Labov is nearly alone in attempting to extend the theory of grammar to account for details of a dialect. As I mentioned above, particularly within transformational grammar, linguists generally have been content with fairly gross generalizations and have not considered the more accurate detailed facts about any dialect. Particularly significant is that only within the framework of transformational grammar has it become possible to attempt this further refinement of linguistic description discussed briefly above. Even so, I feel it suffers, at least for the moment, from the notation which is extremely cumbersome, even to the transformational grammarian working in the field. This may be a function of the particular set of notational devices or that too many aspects of a rule have been crowded into a single rule formula. There is no easy way to decide this question.

The second issue of theoretical interest raised by recent work on non-standard dialects is that no research has been done which remotely resembles a theory of comparative dialectology. There exists some impressionistic evidence suggesting that two dialects which share all linguistic features except lexical items and perhaps some phonetic facts are more closely related than those which differ in morphological and/or syntactic features as well. But how to characterize this precisely is not within our present ability. (It is worth noting that there is no theory of comparative linguisticsfor comparing

two languages, either.)

Even more distressing is the fact that there is no adequate way to characterize simply these results. One customarily finds either the detailed, notationally burdened papers written by professional linguists, usually very difficult for the uninitiated to read, or a great over-simplified and misleading rendering of the same material (Fasold and Wolfram (1970) is a good example of this latter genre). If I had the appropriate solution to this problem I would surely present it here. Regrettably, I do not. But I strongly suggest that until one is found, until we find a vehicle which can clearly and adequately communicate the facts about non-standard dialects to the educator, to the materials developer, and to the layman, much of the current research will not be used to its fullest advantage.

3. Results of Descriptive Studies

Because the limits of non-standard English are poorly defined, one might risk offending various sensibilities by drawing the line in the wrong place. We run no such risk. The amount of interesting work on ANY dialect of English during the last few years is remarkably small, and much of it of questionable quality. This I feel we can safely ignore the distinction.

The following citations represent the best of the available literature.

Baratz, Joan C. and Edna Povich.
"Grammatical Constructions in the Language of the Negro Preschool Child."
Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C., 1968.

Bryant, Betty.
"Black English as Viewed by Black People."
Ditto. Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

Fasold, Ralph.
"Tense and the Form 'Be' in Black English."
Language, December, 1969.

Fasold, Ralph, and Walt Wolfram.
"Some Linguistic Features of Black English."
In Teaching Standard English in the Inner City (Fasold, R. and R. Shuy. eds.)
Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, 1970.

Fraser, Bruce.
"A Note on the St. Thomas Dialect."
Ditto, Language Research Foundation, Cambridge, 1969.

Houston, Susan.
"A Sociolinguistic Consideration of the Black English of Children in North Florida."
Language, September, 1969.

Kessler, Sr. Carolyn.
"Noun Plural Realization in Black English."
Ditto, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1969.

Labov, William.
"Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variation in the English Copula."
Language, December, 1969.

Labov, William, P. Cohen, Clarence Robins, and John Lewis.
"A Study of the Structure of Non-standard English Used by Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City."
Final Report, Cooperative Research Project No. 3288, Office of Education, 1968.

Loflin, Marvin D.
"On the Structure of the Verb in a Dialect of American Negro English."
Report No. 26, Center for Research in Social Behavior, University of Missouri, 1967.

Loflin, Marvin D.
"On the Passive in Non-standard Negro English."
Journal of English as a Second Language, Spring, 1969.

Loflin, Marvin D.
"Negro Non-standard and Standard English: Same or Different Deep Structure?"
Center for Research in Social Behavior, University of Missouri, 1968.

Luelsdorff, Phillip.
"A Segmental Phonology of Black English."
Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1970.

Luelsdorff, Phillip.
"Mini-Lexicon of Black English."
University of Winconsin, 1970.

Politzer, Robert and Diana Bartley.
"Standard English and Non-Standard Dialects: Phonology and Morphology."
Research and Development Memorandum No. 46, School of Education,
Stanford University, 1969.

Shuy, Roger.
"Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech."

Shuy, Roger.
"A Study of Social Dialects in Detroit."
Final Report, Project No. 6-1347, Office of Education, 1968.

Shuy, Roger, Walter Wolfram, and William Riley.
"Field Techniques in an Urban Language Study."
Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C., 1968.

Smith, Riley
"Interrelatedness of Certain Deviant Grammatical Structures in
Negro Non-Standard Dialects."
Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C., 1969.

Wolfram, Walter.
"A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech."
Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C. 1969.

Wolfram, Walter.
"Linguistic Correlates of Social Difference in the Negro
Community."

Wolfram, Walter.
"Social Dialects from a Linguistic Perspective: Assumptions,
Current Research, and Future Directions."
MS, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, 1969.

Wolfram, Walter.
"Underlying Representations in Black English Phonology."
MS, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, 1969.

It is striking to note the very few really linguistically oriented studies that have appeared in print. And of these, nearly all are on Black English. I know of no linguistic studies on the dialects of English spoken by Cubans, Puerto Ricans (Labov, et al., 1968, does not actually include Puerto Rican speech data), Chinese, American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Japanese, Eskimos, Hawaiians or Portuguese, to name the most obvious dialect groups of non-native English speakers. Nor can I find any substantive research in the literature (although there is some in preparation) on various regional dialects such as Appalachian, Southern-rural, or Virgin Island, again to name some of the most obvious cases. In fact, there has been relatively little linguistic study of non-standard English.

Of those studies which do exist, nearly all deal with Black English and then, are primarily concerned with the way in which the social status of the speaker correlates with linguistic variables. An excellent example is the Detroit study (Wolfram, 1969). Wolfram analyzed data from 48 Negro informants living for at least 10 years in the city of Detroit, and from 12 white informants. The group of 60 was divided as follows: 12 upper-middle class whites (UMW); 12 upper-middle class Negroes (UMN); 12 lower-middle class Negroes (LWN); 12 upper working class Negroes (UWN); and 12 lower working class Negroes (LWN). (It is not clear from the breakdown if middle-class Negroes work or not.) The analysis of consonant cluster simplification for monomorphemic cases is summarized in the following table:

TABLE II

	Cons.	Non-Cons.
UMW	66.4	11.5
UMN	78.0	22.6
LMN	86.7	43.3
UWN	93.5	65.4
LWN	97.3	72.1

Percentage of Final Cluster Member Absent
When Followed by Consonantal and Non-Consonantal Environments (Wolfram, 1969, page 62)

Not only does his data reflect the same general trend as that from Labov et al. (1968) presented above, but it shows that the tendency for deletion in any environment increases as one goes down the SES level from middle to lower working class. Much of the data from this survey is presented in this clear and straightforward manner. But I mention again that it takes the careful, diligent and linguistically experienced reader to abstract the facts from this descriptive work.

In addition to the purely descriptive works, there is a small but excellent body of literature which treats the relationship between the culture and speech of non-standard speakers of English. Again, the emphasis is on Black English to the exclusion of all other non-standard dialects. The following citations represent outstanding work in this area.

Abrahams, Roger.
"Black Uses of Black English"
Ditto, The University of Texas at Austin, 1969.

Abrahams, Roger.
"The Advantages of Black English."
Presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, session on "English for the Disadvantaged," Jacksonville, Florida, 1970.

Abrahams, Roger.
"Black Talk and Black Education"
Florida FL Reporter, Spring/Summer 1969.

Bailey, Beryl.
"Language and Communication Styles of Afro-American Children in the U.S.
Florida FL Reporter, Spring/Summer, 1969.

Hannerz, Ulf.
Soulside: Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community.
Lund, Sweden: Berlingska Boktryckeriet, 1969.

Kochman, Thomas.
"Black English in the Classroom."
To appear in The Functions of Language in the Classroom,
C. Cazden, D. Hymes and V. John (eds.)
Teachers College Press, forthcoming.

Kochman, Thomas.
"Rapping in the Black Ghetto."
Transaction, February, 1969.

Labov, William, P. Cohen, Clarence Robins, and John Lewis.
"A Study of the Structure of Non-standard English Used by Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City."
Final Report, Cooperative Research Project No. 3288, Office of Education, 1968.

Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia.
"Language Behavior in a Black Urban Community"
Working Paper No. 23, Language-Behavior Research Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, 1969.

Williams, Fredrick and Rita Naramore.
"On the Functional Analysis of Social Class Differences in Modes of Speech."
Speech Monographs 36, 1969, 77-102.

These works are all oriented toward the question of how language functions for the black person in his own cultural environment. The basic assumption underlying the work is that a real understanding of a language can come only when one knows the cultural and social aspects of the dialect group as well as the linguistic features we have previously discussed. As Kochman (1969) has put it:

> "Rapping", "shucking", "jiving","running it down", "gripping", "copping a plea", "signifying", and"sounding" are all part of the black ghetto idiom and describe different kinds of talking. Each has its own distinguishing features of form, style, and function; each is influenced by, and influences, the speaker, setting, and audience; and each sheds light on the black perspective and the black condition -- on those orienting values and attitudes that will cause a speaker to speak or perform in his own way within the social context of the black community. (p.26)

Discussion of these speech styles or a taxonomy of the black society are well beyond the scope of this paper. It is important to point out, however, that the linguist has generally ignored this aspect of language in his research. He has not usually considered the use to which an utterance might be put,

but only the syntactic structure, phonetic shape, and meaning of the utterance. He has not attempted to determine why one particular speech style might be used in a given situation or the communicative significance of extra-linguistic features such as body movement, hand gestures, etc. Nor has he felt it appropriate that he do so since the philosophical framework with which the linguist has worked is that of the ideal speaker/hearer.

However, there is a slow but nonetheless apparent change within the field of linguistics toward a greater concern with and systematic consideration of the use of language and its function in communication. Particularly the work of Labov, Wolfram and Shuy in the area of social dialects has shown that research in sociolinguistics can have substantive content and, as I have indicated in an earlier section, can raise important questions in linguistic theory. Of course, the researcher trained as a linguist is not qualified to function as an expert cultural anthropologist or sociologist just as researchers in these fields are not expert linguists. Truly significant insights into language and its function in a cultural and social setting can come only through some combination of efforts by linguists, anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists. Unfortunately, seldom is a first-rate combination found.

4. Application of Research on Non-standard English

The foregoing discussion has indicated a lack of substantive research in the area of non-standard dialects of English, particularly in the non-black area. But let us consider how such research might be utilized were it presently available. Two paths immediately suggest themselves. The first is the development of materials for the teaching of standard English to non-standard speakers. The argument holds that with better knowledge of the language interference

problems and cultural setting of the children being taught (i.e., where the children are now), more effective teaching materials will follow. I am in complete agreement with this thinking. I am also willing to agree that, all other things being equal, the adult with a command of standard English (as well as other dialects) will find more opportunities available in society as it is structured today. It follows that I would support all children learning standard English at some point. But I am not at all convinced that standard English should be taught, as such, to children, and particularly, that SE should be taught in the public schools. Moreover, I am not convinced that SE c a n be taught to children in the limited time of the classroom if the subject is placed on a par with reading, arithmetic, history, and so forth. Nonetheless, programs have sprung up in nearly all large U.S. cities which are designed to teach SE to non-standard speaking children. And many of these programs quite openly attempt to draw on research in non-standard dialects and language use. Lack of success of these programs might be attributed in some large part to the lack of useful research. Moreover, much of the research which as been done is unavailable because of its technical form of presentation.

The second area involves the training of teachers who encounter non-standard speakers in the classroom. What such an alternative entails is a radical retraining of many in-service teachers. To date, there are practically no materials which serve to help teachers become aware of their own attitudes toward language differences, and particularly toward non-standard speakers. Teachers need materials to help them recognize dialect similarities and differences; to gain a better understanding what the child is saying (or meaning);

to help them toward an awareness of the cultural and social back ground of the child, and to provide them with tools for analyzing the linguistic situation in their own classrooms. Teachers must then be able to utilize the language abilities of these children, though different in many cases from white middle class abilities, for maximum effectiveness in their teaching. At the same time, there are no materials which assist the teacher in knowing how the child feels about the teacher's dialect, his own dialect, the personality of the teacher, the school situation, and so forth. In short, the teacher doesn't know where the child is and vice versa.

There are a few exceptions to the lack of research in this area of teacher training, although there is no literature available at the moment. The BALA Project, Center for Applied Linguistics; The East Texas Project, Austin; the Language Research Foundation, Cambridge; and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, are all involved in carrying out research in this area, but there are no tangible results to date.

5. Conclusions

The tone of the preceding discussion has been somber. Were it not such an important area which calls for real excellence in basic and applied research, such pessimism would not be warranted. But considering the lack of effectiveness of our schools, the covert and overt hostility towards the speech and speaker of non-standard dialects, and the incredible yet unfortunately true belief by some educated Americans that non-standard dialects are impoverished and incapable of full logical and expressive power, the field must receive better treatment immediately.

The theoretical issues are interesting but not nearly as significant as the others. Furthermore, as more descriptive research is carried out, many of the interesting theoretical issue will undoubtably become resolved, if only by having the actual problem clarified. Extremely high on a list of priorities must be the study of the communication systems -- the linguistic features, the culture, the social origanization, the language use -- of the significant non-standard English speaking groups in the U.S., e.g., Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, Hawaiians, and so forth. As I have attempted to indicate, the study of the linguistic features in isolation from its use is sterile. Second, we must seriously consider the question of teaching SE in the school; if it is to be done, and if so, how? Third, independent of the teaching of SE, I see no alternative to improving the effectiveness of the school situation other than improving the effectiveness of the student-teacher communication. This is no mean task, particularly in the case of experienced teachers in established school systems where resistance to change is formidable. Finally, there is an obvious need for training of professional linguists, sociologists and anthropologists who represent the non-standard English speaking groups. At present, there are less than half a dozen black linguists actively working on dialect research and I suspect the number from Puerto Rican, Cuban, Chinese, Eskimo and other non-standard English speaking groups is yet smaller. There is a serious question whether anyone other than a non-standard dialect speaker can effectively obtain accurately information about the dialect. If this is true, the research into non-standard dialects which is so badly need is going to be still further impeded until additional effective researchers are trained.